

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Body vs. Mouth

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, March 4th, 2020

When we first viewed Tadhi Alawi's beautiful film **Body vs. Mouth**, we were blown away. The degree to which he inherently understood the concept of embracing dance anywhere and the importance of taking dance into the heart of community is evident in every aspect of the film. From the beauty of putting dance in the middle of a busy and bustling Tanzanian marketplace, to the poetic truth of the voice over/subtitles ("Sometimes I wish to keep quiet and let my body communicate with my community"), and the spontaneity and beauty of the movement.

We asked Tadhi a number of questions about the making of his film and about what inspired him, but the most beautiful explanation is in the film's liner notes. The following is a combination of those and his answers to our questions.

This time he let his mouth do the talking.

SE: How did you first hear about **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival (D2D)** and what appealed to you about it?

TA: *I heard about **D2D** through one of my friends based in America, Dominique Robinson. I sent a sneak peak of my new dance film and she recommended submitting to **D2D**.*

SE: Was your film created specifically for the festival and/or did you have a particular urge to make a film in the public realm?

TA: *I made this dance film in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where I come from and am based. It was created as an introduction to my new choreography that will be engaged with the topic of body versus mouth as one way to communicate with my community and nature without verbal dialogue. That is why it's partly in public.*



SE: What were you inspired by and/or exploring in making your film?

TA: *The idea to this film came right after I experienced 48 hours of not talking and staying in silence. I realized my body has a nature to keep on talking even though I am staying in silence. I recognized how my senses were stepping front during those hours and how my fantasy of my nature became clearer to me.*

During the time of shutting my mouth I was staying in Nairobi Kenya with deaf people and the

communication between us had been concentrated to our bodies. I had never experienced anything like this before and I am glad the time was intense enough to show me more value and awareness for our natural languages that are not led by our mouths.

The piece I created from this idea shows the stillness and patience of how nature can powerfully talk without words. It shows the connection between our bodies and the ground we stay, grow and live upon. The body and the ground are soil, are earth. Our bodies evolve from soil and return to soil. Nature is germinating constantly... the connection between the water, the air, the breath and the soil. The spirits are connected in an everlasting circulation.

SE: What were your biggest challenges in making the film?

TA: *The area the film was taken in was kind of people who don't really understand my art. It was not easy to get access. We took a lot of time to film and cut so many times.*

SE: Who were your biggest collaborators and/or influence, and what did you learn in the filmmaking process from working with them?

TA: *I was collaborating with FUAD Production in Dar es Salaam to make the film and I would like to give thanks to them for putting an effort into making it. It was the first dance film they experienced... I learned that making a dance film is not easy but its really nice exchanging thoughts with your team.*



Next up for Tadhi is a new solo that he's looking forward to making and travelling with. He also works with Nantea Dance Company who are preparing for their next dance event, "Contemporary Dance Night" in June 2020.

Tadhi has collaborated with several International companies and choreographers including: XU Huang Huang Company China (2012), Nora Chipaumire Company USA (2013), Panta Rei Dance Theatre Norway (2014), Anjorombala Madagascar (2015), Johannes Wieland Germany (2018), Black Box Dance Company Denmark (2015 and 2018) and Kampnagel Theater Hamburg Germany (2019). Tadhi's vision is to portray different forms of beauty through arts as a means of creating a positive impact and contributing to the development of Tanzania's scene and communities. You can follow Tadhi here on [Instagram](#)

Body vs. Mouth won Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival's award for **Best Interface with the Public** and why he won becomes evident when you watch the film... *Enjoy.*

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